

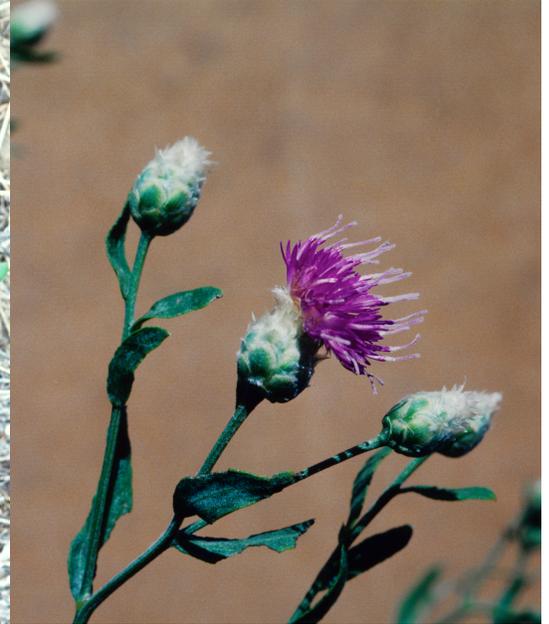
“B” Rated Weeds

A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant, but may have limited distribution in some counties

Russian knapweed
Acroptilon repens

Other common names: Turkistan thistle, creeping knapweed, mountain bluet, Russian cornflower, hardheads

USDA symbol: ACRE3
ODA rating: B



Introduction: This aggressive perennial knapweed, native to Eurasia, was probably introduced into North America around 1898 in contaminated alfalfa seed. It is found in every western state infesting both native range and irrigated cropland. Growing in dense clumps it will completely exclude desirable vegetation seriously reducing carrying capacity for wildlife and livestock.

Distribution in Oregon: Russian knapweed is concentrated in the central, north central and southeastern parts of Oregon. West of the Cascades, a few infestations have been identified and eradicated.

Description: Russian knapweed is a deep-rooted, long-lived perennial growing up to 2.5 feet tall. It forms dense colonies of erect branched stems sporting leaves covered in fine whitish hairs giving them a gray-green hue. Lower leaves are deeply lobed, 2 to 4 inches long; upper leaves are entire. It has cone-shaped flowering heads, ¼ to ½ inch wide, pink to lavender, growing at each branch tip. Flower bracts are rounded with papery margins. Roots are distinguishable by their black color and bark-like texture. Russian knapweed commonly grows along roadsides, pastures, croplands, irrigation ditches as well as riverbanks and disturbed areas. It prefers clay soils and a semi-arid environment.

Impacts: Once Russian knapweed is established, it can overrun native grasslands as well as irrigated crops. It has dense growth spreading by root fragments or seed. Some Russian knapweed stands have persisted for 75 years. Russian knapweed can be successfully controlled with combinations of grazing and herbicides but controls must persist for several years for complete eradication.

Biological controls: One approved biocontrol agent, a gall nematode, *Subanguina picridis* is established in Oregon.

